



North Tyneside Council

# Minutes

**Meeting** Schools Forum **Date** Wednesday 7 July 2021

**Location** Via Microsoft Teams

**Present**

✓ Present  
D Deputy  
A Apologies  
O Absent

Name	Organisation	Representing	10.03.21	07.07.21
Andrew James	St Aidan's Primary	Primary	✓	✓
Angi Gibson	Hadrian Park Primary	Primary	✓	✓
Candida Mellor / Claire MacLeod	Trade Unions	Trade Unions	Claire Macleod	Claire Macleod
David Bavaird	Norham High School	Governor - Secondary	✓	✓
David Watson	St Thomas More	RC Schools	✓	✓
Gavin Storey	Cullercoats Primary	Primary	✓	✓
Jill Wraith	Benton Dene Primary	Primary	✓	✓
Joanne Thompson	Holystone Out of School	Early Years PVI	✓	✓
John Croft	Sir James Knott	Nursery	✓	✓
John Newport	Marden Bridge Middle School	Middle	✓	✓
Karen Croskery	North Tyneside Student Support Service	PRU	✓	A
Kelly Holbrook	Longbenton High School	Secondary	✓	✓
Kerry Lillico	Grasmere Academy	Academy	✓	✓
Laura Baggett	Monkhouse Primary	Primary	✓	✓
Marie Flatman / Mo Dixon	Tyne Met	16-19 Provider	O	O
Fr Martin Lee	Diocese	C of E Diocese	O	O
Matt Snape	Marden High School	Secondary	✓	✓
Michael Young	Spring Gardens Primary	Primary	✓ *part meeting*	✓
Paul Mitchell	Whitley Bay High School	Governor – Secondary	✓	✓
Paul Johnson	Churchill Community College	Secondary	✓ *part meeting*	✓
Peter Gannon	Silverdale School	Special	✓	✓
Peter Thorp	Redesdale Primary	Governor - Primary	O	✓
Philip Sanderson	Kings Priory	Academy	✓	✓
Stephen Baines	Holystone Primary	Primary	✓	A
Stephen Easton	Marine Park First School	First	✓	✓
Steve Wilson	Whitley Bay High School	High	✓	A
Tim Jones	Langley First School	Primary	✓	✓
<b>In Attendance:</b>				
Mark Longstaff	Head of Commissioning & Asset Management	NTC	✓	✓
Claire Emmerson	Senior Manager - Finance Strategy & Planning	NTC	✓	✓
Noel Kay	Senior Business Partner, Finance	NTC	✓	✓
Diane Thompson	Finance	ENGIE	✓	✓
Susan Smiles	Finance	ENGIE	N/A	✓

Christina Ponting	Senior Manager - Schools HR	ENGIE/NTC	✓	✓
Mary Nergaard	PA to Head of Commissioning & Asset Management	NTC	✓	✓
Diane Buckle	Assistant Director for Education	NTC	N/A	✓
Kevin Burns	Senior School Improvement Officer (Vulnerable Learners)	NTC	N/A	✓
Mark Taylor	Strategic Commissioning Manager	NTC	N/A	✓

Item		Action
<b>1.</b>	<b>Apologies for Absence</b>	
	See Table above.	
<b>2.</b>	<b>Attendance Register / Membership</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A number of terms of office were up for review since the last meeting and we have been working with members to ensure that Schools Forum continued to have an active member for that locality.</li> <li>Membership have been confirmed for a number of members (Stephen Baines, Andrew James, Phillip Sanderson, Claire MacLeod, Steve Wilson) so they will remain as members of Schools Forum for their locality area.</li> <li>Six memberships will require review in the Autumn term and we will work with those members/the locality to ensure that active Schools Forum membership is retained</li> <li>There is one action that will be addressed before the end of this term, this being Kelly Holbrook, whose current term of office ends in September 2021.</li> <li>Tim Jones will leave Schools Forum as he is moving onto a school in another area and TJ has been working with his locality to appoint a replacement. This was confirmed by TJ during the meeting as Colleen Ward who has been a Schools Forum member for that area previously.</li> </ul>	
<b>3.</b>	<b>Public Meeting / Observers</b>	
	The Chair welcomed the public to the meeting	
<b>4.</b>	<b>Declaration of Interest</b>	
	Item 6.2 – Peter Gannon	
<b>5.</b>	<b>Minutes of the last meeting</b>	
	Minutes agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.	
<b>6.</b>	<b>Matters Arising</b>	
	<b>Page 5, Item 6.1.iv – High Needs Consultation.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Request for assistance with a carefully worded response to the consultation was raised at HT briefing as requested.</li> </ul>	
	<b>Page 6, Item 7 – AOB.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concerns around the decision regarding unused hours in the Education Psychology Service were forwarded to relevant service lead as requested.</li> </ul>	
<b>6.1</b>	<b>Finance Update</b>	<b>Claire Emmerson</b>
	Before delivering the presentation, CE provided an update regarding a school that had been victim to a case of fraud in relation to a payment to a contractor. The school received an invoice from a contractor then subsequently agreed to change	

the bank details on the invoice after it was issued following instruction that had been received via email. This resulted in a significant sum being paid fraudulently and not to the contractor. Reminder issued to all schools to please be vigilant when making changes of this nature. It was noted that this type of fraud in increasing and all schools need to carry out sufficient checks to ensure payments made are legitimate as this may have an impact on whether it is covered by insurance.

CE talked through the PowerPoint presentation. Main points to note as follows:

**a. Finance Update:**

- It was noted that this is the provisional outturn as currently going through external audit
- Outturn at 2019/20 was £0.165m, budget plan originally showed - £6.755m which showed improvement at monitoring 1 (-£5.677m) and 2 (-£2.900m) resulting in a provisional outturn at year end of 2020/21 of £3.721m. Some analysis is needed to understand the reasons behind the swing which happens year on year and makes it increasingly difficult to predict year end balances
- Long term trend was shown in screen
- Some of the change may be due to commitments that may get carried forward to the next year
- **Covid impact:**
  - The Government has met some of the costs of the impact of the Covid-19 outbreak with £1.881m being met by funding from the Department for Education (DfE) and partially from budget savings due to schools being closed.
  - The Authority's Recovery Coordinating Group (RCG) agreed to provide containment funding to mitigate some of the impact for the latter half of 202/21, setting aside 0.450m with a further 0.500m proposed for the first half of 2021/22. Schools have been asked to retrospectively apply for funding in 2021/22 to offset the qualifying costs they have already absorbed for October 2020 to March 2021. Submissions deadline was 30 June
- **School deficits:** 3 schools ended the year no longer needing a deficit agreement through allocations from headroom and have made significant improvements. 9 schools remain in deficit and all but one school managed to stay within the licensed deficit agreement. The team continue to work with that school.
- The Chair issued thanks to the finance team and the head teachers/schools for the work carried out to reach this position
- CE noted the efforts of the collaborative work and how this has paid off
- Forum echoed the comments of the Chair
- **DSG outturn:** Showing a net deficit balance of £7.932m. This compares to a deficit of £3.262m in 2019/20.
- Pressures in High Needs Block of £8.720m partially offset by underspend in Early Years Block of £0.199m and an underspend of £0.589m on Centrally Retained and De-Delegated items
- As the DSG is a ringfenced account, any balance is carried forward into the next financial year

- **High Needs Block:** Outturn in 2019/20 showed an overspend of £4.545m. This has continued in 2020/21 in line with national trends. Provisional in-year outturn of £4.175m for 2020/21 leaving a cumulative pressure of £8.720m
- Breakdown of High Needs pressures was provided
- **Falling rolls, growth and Schools in financial difficulty:** 5 schools eligible for falling rolls, 5 schools eligible for growth funding and 3 schools are expected to submit a Schools in Financial Difficulty application. Meeting scheduled with the affected schools and sub-group
- **NFF consultation:** The Authority has now moved to the NFF for most things and now needs to make a decision on FSM/FSM6. Some modelling is to be carried out over the summer and brought back to Forum in September before commencing the 4 week consultation

### **Recommendations**

Schools Forum is asked to:

- acknowledge the provisional 2020/21 outturn position on all DSG balances;  
**Noted**
- acknowledge the school budget plans overall summary position and the Deficit Schools positions for both 2020//21 and 2021/22;  
**Noted**
- acknowledge the forecasts for DSG positions in 2021/2/21 and the likely impact of Covid-19 on school balances;  
**Noted**
- acknowledge the current pressure on the High Needs block, noting the requirement for the Authority to submit a DSG Management plan week commencing 9 August 2021.  
**Noted**

### **b. Financial Transparency in Maintained Schools**

- Background provided. Consultation launched in 2019 and reported back in August 2020.
- Majority of the changes are in section 2.2 of the Scheme for financing schools
- The proposed Scheme is set out in Appendix 1 of the report with all changes highlighted in a 'Tracked Changes' format.
- The Scheme has been reviewed to ensure that all terminology is up to date and that its provisions appropriately reflect the current financial and management environments and some minor changes in wording have been made.
- DfE will collect information on those with suspended budgets or notices of concern. We don't have any in North Tyneside at the moment as our process for managing deficits works really well
- Changes have been highlighted in yellow

### **Recommendations:**

Schools Forum is asked to:

- note the new reporting requirements for both local authorities and maintained schools

**Noted**

- approve the revised Scheme for Financing Schools and its retrospective application from 24 August 2020. (Maintained Schools only)

**Approved****c. Central School Services Block**

- Overview was provided on the breakdown of the CSSB to highlight the spend on Statutory and Regulatory duties as follows:
  - Statutory and Regulatory = £0.578m
  - Education Welfare = £0.107m
  - Asset Management = £0.356m
  - Other ongoing duties = £0.382m (includes licencing)
- This leaves a total of £1.432m and shows that the Local Authority is picking up costs to bridge the gap
- A reference to the Education Act was shown on screen to highlight what is covered under each heading
- DB issued thanks to members of schools forum that have assisted throughout this process and gave up their time to contribute
- CSSB funding contributes 0.652m and this is expected to be reduced by a further 20% year on year for the next 5 years
- This funding is used to pay for support allowing the LA to enhance their statutory functions, particularly for vulnerable schools
- In the context of the expected reductions in CSSB funding, the steering group and the collective views of schools has helped the LA to redevelop the framework of support
- Review of the functions has been carried out to establish understanding on what is delivered, funded and the overlaps. Options were considered on what schools value most and what best aligns to our strategy along with what the impacts of reductions would be
- Now looking at what needs to be protected, what can be reduced and what could be added to an SLA offer
- Historically the bulk of the funding had gone on monitoring and intervention across all phases (40%) and there was no efficiency placed on that modelling. Work has been carried out to review the support challenge framework with added focus on outcomes
- Overview of the revised framework was provided which will use previous 2 years data as a trigger to establish if intervention is needed following discussions with the school. If it was agreed that support was needed then this would be time limited, i.e. 2 terms. If a school was not seeing improvement in 2 years then it would move to level 2 then subsequently level 3
- Efficient, time limited process with a clear exit strategy
- Assessment / moderation was deemed to be sufficient for most schools. From a statutory point of view the service needs 26 days with one officer to carry out this function
- Looking at behaviour support in the wider sense, we had considerable discussions on the funding mechanism and what we want to do about that
- NQT awarding body – Need to negotiate through 3 rivers for all the training but they are not taking on the awarding body. This is being

	<p>carried out by the Authority. We will have to continue this work for one more year while a plan is put in place</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proposals were outlined as follows for what will continue, reduce, stop or move to an SLA based on feedback from Schools</li> <li>Protected: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Headteacher meetings</li> <li>Telephone support</li> <li>Local authority representation at EIP, PLP &amp; SHOG</li> <li>Section 11 audits</li> <li>6<sup>th</sup> day exclusion for permanent exclusions</li> <li>Educational visits sign-off</li> </ul> </li> <li>Reduced: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refreshed monitoring and intervention framework</li> <li>Curriculum modelling</li> <li>EYFS moderation</li> <li>KS1 &amp; KS2 moderation</li> <li>KS1 phonics check</li> </ul> </li> <li>Alternative funding or SLA: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ofsted support</li> <li>Extended intervention support</li> <li>School development planning</li> <li>SEND support</li> <li>Educational Visits support</li> <li>Behaviour support</li> </ul> </li> <li>Next steps is the implementation which involves engaging with Schools Forum, engaging with all schools, implementing the new core offer and the revised SLA offer</li> <li><b><u>ACTION:</u> DB to share briefing with Schools Forum members</b></li> <li>PG noted the comments on Behaviour support and noted that DB has been asked to come forward with a model on how this work can be funded.</li> <li><b><u>ACTION:</u> The findings will be presented to PLP and brought back to Forum in September</b></li> </ul>	<p>DB</p> <p>DB</p>
6.2	<p><b>SEND Including Finance</b></p> <p><b>Diane Buckle/Kevin Burns/Mark Taylor</b></p> <p><b>a. DSG – Management Plan, High Needs Recovery</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CE provided an update on the High Needs Recovery meeting with the Education and Schools Funding Agency (ESFA) on 16 June and shared the presentation</li> <li>Once the plan is formulated it will come back to Forum in September</li> <li>Presentation looks at the current pressure, main pressures in the High Needs Block, and actions taken so far</li> <li>Current pressures outlined which highlights that we need to do something now to prevent the pressures increasing further</li> <li>Main pressures on the High needs block include increase spending on specialist provision, increased spending on mainstream top ups and increase spending on out of borough places</li> <li>Graph shown on screen that outlined the increase in pressures year on year by area with commissioned services being the only area that</li> </ul>	

	<p>remained static while Special Schools, ARPs/Mainstream and Out of Borough continue to increase</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MT presented the figures highlighting the increase in specialist and PRU provision. Special school places are up from 543 to 702, PRU up from 87 to 165 since Oct 2017. It was noted that the figures relate to places rather than children but trends show that the placements are longer term</li> <li>• We have more children in specialist provision when compared to our pupil population</li> <li>• Percentage of the EHCP group out of borough remains around 12% however, because the overall cohort is increasing, this is still an increase in numbers placed out of borough</li> <li>• Overview of the types of placements out of borough was provided showing that 59 of the 72 placements are day placements, of which 30 access provision through Percy Hedley. The main driver has been parental choice.</li> <li>• Example costs was outlined</li> <li>• KB noted that placements where it is down to parental choice is open to tribunal, however, if it goes to tribunal it has historically not gone in the Authority's favour. Although, changes in the offer has helped the authority gain some success when going to tribunal</li> <li>• KB provided an update on the increase in EHCPs. ESFA expressed that they could see no reason why our figures are so high and above the national average</li> <li>• We need to ensure that the children have the correct support that they need at each individual level</li> <li>• Follow up conversation expected with the DfE to explore this further</li> <li>• We are aware that North Tyneside is an outlier and has seen a sustained increase over the last 2/3 years which is higher than the national average</li> <li>• Schools are telling us that they are finding it increasingly difficult within the universal offer and exhausting their available offers</li> <li>• Need to enhance and develop the universal offer, particularly around mental health and wellbeing and issues linked to speech, language and communication</li> <li>• DB outlined the actions already taken including the work carried out on the inclusion strategy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Reduction in unfilled ARP places/change of function</li> <li>○ Investment in training for statutory services team to ensure that the plans are right and quality assured</li> <li>○ Short term investment to address the backlog in annual reviews</li> <li>○ Longer term investment to increase resources to ensure annual reviews are carried out.</li> <li>○ Strategic officer group now in place to work with partners and address pressures</li> <li>○ Developing the universal offer on mental health. Even before Covid there was an increase in need for mental health resources. Pilot offer commenced to address this issue</li> <li>○ New model of graduation launched in January 2021. Roll out was interrupted due to Covid-19. Relaunching in September 2021</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Planned actions</li> </ul>	
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- Improved graduation approach to support young people to have access to their local school
- Review of commissioned services with a focus on maintaining young people in their local school
- Annual reviews are focused, timely and include value for money
- Review of the banding mechanisms we use to fund schools to ensure they are brought in line with our graduation aspirations
- Use of Capital funding and more effective place planning to address capacity and resources
- Ensuring that we are working with stakeholders and partners
- Projected impact on the DSG was discussed. Overspend is running at £4.5m per annum (approx. 17% of HNB allocation). Aim to reduce this using the measures outlined above
- In addition we will seek approval for the transfer of 0.5% from the schools block to the HNB (approx. 0.700m). This is not about plugging a gap. We will be coming back to forum with a specific brief about how that funding will be utilised. Historically, this is a yes or no question during the consultation. Proposed changes to the consultation exercise to ensure all schools understand the detail behind how this money would be spent. Current process is unsustainable, and the funding would be utilised to find solutions
- Overview of the stakeholders that have and will be engaged with was provided
- Next steps:
  - Officer meeting scheduled 9 July and 16 July to agree the action plan, engage in consultation through to the ESFA submission and completion of the DSG Management Plan
  - Draft submission to ESFA due w/c 9 August
  - To come back to Schools Forum in September with an update on submission, potential feedback from the ESFA, a paper outlining strategy and actions needed for the DSG Management Plan and consultation with Schools for LFF including 0.5% Schools Block transfer
  - Consultation on Local funding formula to commence in September (give assurances that money not just to plug the gap)
  - Back to Forum in November to report on the outcome of the consultation and a further update on the DSG management plan

Discussion followed around:

- Places in ARPs and the plans to reduce out of borough placements
- MT noted that we have removed a couple of historically unfilled places in ARPs but equally we have been clear around our priorities. We are now in phase 2 of the review of ARPs in making sure that it's not about removing ARP places but making sure we have the right support in the right place
- With regard to out of borough placements, the Authority has strong aspirations in meeting the need in borough to reduce the need to go out of borough for future placement and continue to explore options for bringing some placement back into borough if possible
- DW asked if the costs highlighted were purely educational costs or are other elements included. MT confirmed that they are purely educational costs.



	<p>There will be costs over and above that for health and care costs, particularly with residential provision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• JW noted that having experienced a serious recent issue with SEMH; they and other school heads need help to address primary need and response in line with the secondary schools. It was acknowledged that is being dealt with via PLP. DBu noted the comments and noted that work is ongoing on this matter.</li> <li>• PM asked to what extent does/will the NFF drive the future total allocation for this area. CE noted that the High Needs Block already has a NFF. CE noted the potential changes to the NFF and possible reductions but at present there is no further information on possible changes available</li> <li>• PM asked to what extent is that determined by a formula and to what extent does the school or the LA have the ability to top up. CE noted that the Authority can't influence the NFF for the High Needs Block. We can transfer up to 0.5% in to the High Needs Block from the Schools block and this is subject to the consultation as outlined above</li> <li>• AJ asked how many years we have been agreeing this annual transfer. PG noted that we haven't transferred for the last 2 years.</li> <li>• PG declared an interest due to his role as the head of a special school and noted the increase in provision at his school</li> <li>• CE noted that this is an in-year transfer and not a cumulative transfer</li> <li>• JW noted that we really need to challenge out of borough placements with an in-borough solution.</li> </ul>	
<b>7.</b>	<b>Future Meeting Dates / Arrangements</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proposed dates circulated</li> <li>• The Chair talked through the options for meeting arrangements from September</li> <li>• Forum's preferred option was to continue with virtual meetings and review in January</li> </ul>	
<b>8.</b>	<b>Any Other Business</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No matters arising.</li> <li>• JW issued thanks to the finance team and the Chair</li> </ul>	
	<b>Date of next meeting</b>	
	Wednesday 22 September 2021 at 12:30pm	